

DEVELOPMENT DAVID ADAMS

# Tribeca at the treeline

New Mount Buller apartments offer a holiday with style in any season.

**A**MELBOURNE developer is hoping to change the way people perceive alpine accommodation with a 20-apartment complex on Mount Buller.

"You go up to Buller to go skiing – and, by the way, you live in an apartment," is the mood envisioned by Andrew Rettig, managing director of R. Corporation, the name behind apartment developments such as Tribeca East Melbourne and the Metropol in St Kilda.

"How we're looking at it is: up here, you've got an alpine retreat and, by the way, one of the things you can do is you can go skiing ... Our aim is that people will view their alpine retreat as a luxurious holiday option."

The apartments range from two to four bedrooms and each has an open fireplace, indoor-outdoor spa bath and smart layouts that use sliding wall panels to open up bedrooms for extra living space. The apartments also have a drying room and laundry, separate access for skiers and pedestrians, and undercover parking with a lift to the door.

"If you're living in and around Melbourne, why shouldn't you have the same experience in terms of quality of design up in the snow?" asks Rettig. "I mean, you're going up there to relax."

Rettig says One Summit Road – the highest residential address on the mountain and the site of the existing eight-apartment Summit Lodge – was chosen as a location because of the fantastic views it offers (to Mount Stirling and the Bogong High Plains) as well as its orientation – north-west facing to catch the sun – and the proximity to other amenities.

Architect Charles Salter says Australian alpine architecture is dominated by a preference for parochial gimmickry – evidenced by the use of multiple roof and wall planes, rough log props, mixed scale windows, stone features and a variety of cladding materials, all in one building.

"Our interest is to move to a simple, contemporary envelope inevitably controlled through the roof slope for snow shedding," he says.

Salter adds that the development aims to maintain a continuity with the self-built lodges from the 1960s, with their mono-pitched roofs and black creosote cladding.

Based around the form of what Salter terms a big sloped box over a stone plinth, the building will feature a glazed north

facade with precast concrete elements, while the remainder of the building will be wrapped in stained lining boards.

Conditions at Mount Buller, where the building season is limited to between November and June – means many parts need to be prefabricated off the mountain to ensure completion.

"Our approach is to make primary construction elements also the finished elements," says Salter.

Polished concrete sandwich panels are used to satisfy structural, acoustic and fire requirements, while also creating interior wall finishes.

Adopting a strategy Salter used on an RAAI award-winning house in Carlton 10 years ago, internal spaces are defined using prefabricated kitchen, bathroom and cupboard joinery, which are then clad with warm timber panelling – the same as that used to finish exterior walls – to complement the polished concrete.

Paul Hecker, of interior designers Hecker Phelan (known for their work on projects such as the refurbishment of the Botanical Hotel, South Yarra), says the apartments' interior design was aimed at producing the feeling of a chalet rather than a relocated city apartment through the apartments' open plan as well as the use of textured, raw and rustic materials and colours featuring warm, neutral tones.

"It's trying to make sure that we imbue this with some feeling of, one, the country and, two, the snow, and some sense of how we all perceive a chalet to be without it looking like a Heidi environment."

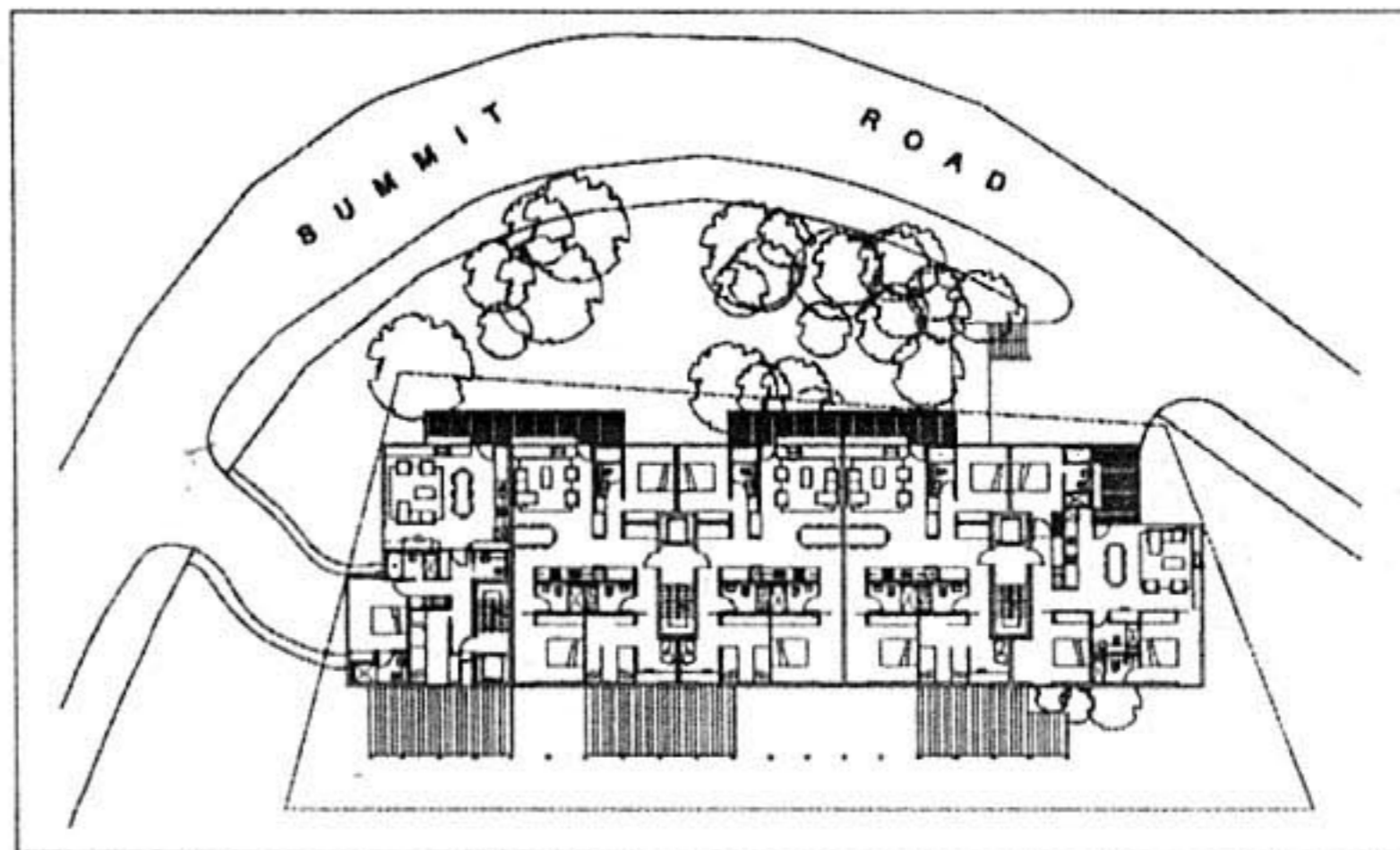
Hecker points out that the interior design has been configured to make the most of the views. "Take the open fireplaces, for example. They've been located in the window so that while looking at the fire, residents can also soak in the views."

The apartments will be sold with the option of contemporary furniture in recognition of the difficulty of moving goods up the mountain.

"We just wanted to make it easy for people ... so all you have to bring is your car keys, a pair of skis and food to eat, because the rest of it will already be there," says Rettig.



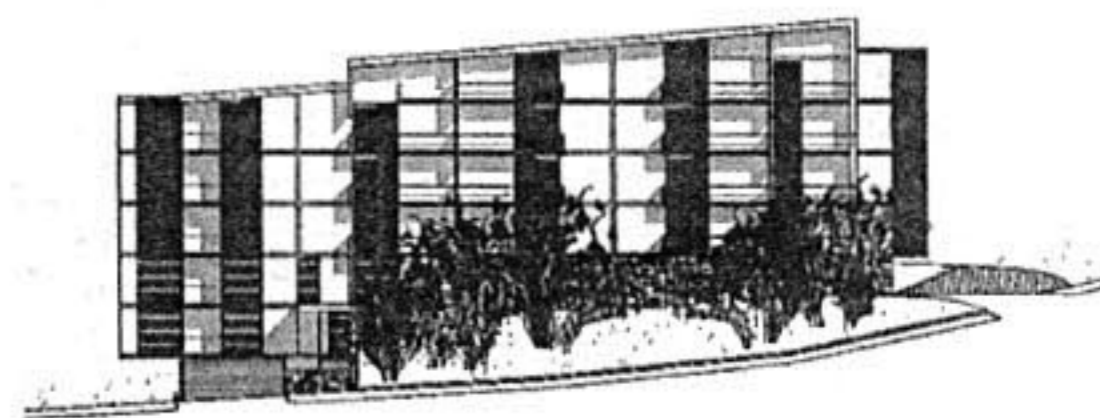
PICTURE: SANDY SCHELTEMA



## FACT FILE

**One Summit Road Developer:** R. Corporation  
**Architect:** Salter Architects  
**Interior Designers:** Hecker Phelan  
**Details:** 20 apartments. Four two-bedroom, (from \$400,000), 14 three-bedroom (from \$600,000) and two four-bedroom residences (from \$900,000).

Each comes with car parking space. Sizes range from 88 metres plus balconies for a one-bedroom, to 110 square metres plus balconies for a four. Furniture packages are optional.  
**For further information contact Mark Adams Real Estate on 9646 4230 or RT Edgar Alpine on 5777 6166.**



Mount Buller is popular with families and young professionals, top. The building, above, is on the highest point of Summit Road. Indicative fit-out for the luxurious apartments, left.